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ABSTRACT

For more than 15 years, the Ford Foundation has supported a substantial program to expand opportunity for black Americans, and more recently, for America's other racial minorities and for women. This working paper summarizes the Foundation's past efforts and describes new initiatives being taken on behalf of these minorities, particularly blacks. The introduction to the report describes various racial incidents that led to the enactment of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. It then summarizes the Foundation's role in supporting subsequent civil rights activity. The next chapter surveys the situation of blacks in the areas of income, unemployment and underemployment, education, and political participation, with supporting data presented in six tables. The current white retreat from the civil rights movement and the difficulties threatening the civil rights infrastructure are then examined. The third chapter presents the Foundation's plans for grant-making activities in five areas: enhancing black political participation, safeguarding employment opportunities, revitalizing church leadership in social justice activities, strengthening the civil rights infrastructure, and consensus building among disadvantaged groups. The report concludes that what is now necessary is the slow, difficult, long-term task of consolidating the gains of the past and keeping our nation's focus on the important work that remains to be done. (CJM)

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Civil Rights, Social Justice, and Black America

A review of past and current Ford Foundation efforts to promote racial justice for black Americans in employment, education, housing, political participation, and other areas.

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Civil Rights, Social Justice, and Black America

A working paper from the Ford Foundation

<u>Preface</u>	3
<u>Introduction</u>	5
<u>Current Problems</u>	11
Income	11
Unemployment and Underemployment	14
Education	15
Political Participation	18
Shifts in the National Mood	19
The Civil Rights Infrastructure	23
<u>Program Responses</u>	27
Enhancing Black Political Participation	28
Safeguarding Employment Opportunities	35
Revitalizing Church Leadership in Social Justice Activities	42
Strengthening the Civil Rights Infrastructure	47
Consensus Building	51
<u>Conclusion</u>	54
<u>Notes</u>	55

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433 January 1984

PREFACE

For more than fifteen years, the Ford Foundation has supported a substantial program to expand opportunity for black Americans. Grants have been made to strengthen civil rights organizations, promote opportunities in education, employment, and housing, enhance black participation in the political process, and improve research on race and poverty. Although most of its early efforts in the civil rights field focused on black Americans, the Foundation's work now includes a similar range of activities on behalf of America's other racial minorities and women.

The nation has made considerable progress in narrowing disparities between whites and blacks in education, income, housing, employment, and other areas. Both the progress that has been made and the work that remains to be done provided the stimulus for this report. Written by Lynn Walker, a program officer in human rights and social justice, the paper traces the problems currently facing blacks in employment, income, education, and political participation. It describes the Foundation's past efforts as well as a number of our new initiatives aimed at improving the situation of black Americans. We hope that others engaged in promoting equal rights for all Americans will find the paper useful in understanding the Foundation's current interests and in reviewing their own activities in the field.

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INTRODUCTION

In the decade prior to 1966, the year in which the Ford Foundation launched a major program in the field of civil rights, repeated instances of racially motivated attacks against blacks and their supporters roused the conscience of the nation. Many Americans were awakened for the first time to the ugly realities of poverty and racism. They were shocked, in 1955, by the kidnapping and lynching of fourteen-year-old Emmett Till in Money, Mississippi; they watched in dismay as the Arkansas National Guard was called into Little Rock in 1957 to protect black schoolchildren from mob violence and abuse; they were horrified by the 1963 bombing of a church in Birmingham, Alabama, that left four black children attending Sunday school dead. The tragic litany of violence and abuse went on and on: the assassination of NAACP Field Secretary Medgar Evers in front of his Jackson, Mississippi, home in 1963; Sheriff Eugene "Bull" Connor's use of police dogs and high-pressure fire hoses to break up civil rights demonstrations in Birmingham, Alabama, in the same year; the murder of civil rights workers James Chaney, Andrew Goodman, and Michael Schwerner in Philadelphia, Mississippi, in 1964 and of James Reeb and Viola Liuzzo in 1965; Lester Maddox, who in 1964 had defiantly refused to admit blacks to his Atlanta, Georgia, restaurant, distributing pick handles to his white customers.

Following the famous "March on Washington" of August 1963, Congress enacted the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which outlawed discrimination based on race in places of public accommodation, in

public facilities, in public schools, and in federally assisted programs and employment. The 1964 Civil Rights Act also established an independent United States Commission on Civil Rights. In 1965 Congress passed the Voting Rights Act, which outlawed racially discriminatory electoral practices. This complex of laws opened the doors of the judiciary to aggrieved blacks. Federal agencies, led by the Department of Justice, began a series of challenges designed to eradicate obvious, race-based legal barriers to equality.

The public consensus for minority civil rights was expanding, gaining support from many quarters including organized labor, concerned students, and a variety of religious groups. This consensus was reinforced by the federal government's efforts to enforce the law and to create a "Great Society" in which all Americans could participate fully. The nation's economy was expanding, and many felt that the country's race problem could be solved through a concerted national effort. The sense of urgency about race questions and the will to address them were intensified by the increasing number of spontaneous, violent riots by inner-city blacks. In the summer of 1966, for example, there were at least forty-three urban disorders, most if not all initially precipitated by confrontations between blacks and the police.

Against this backdrop, the Ford Foundation's then-president, McGeorge Bundy, in a 1966 speech before the National Urban League, surveyed the harsh realities of life in black America and announced the role the Foundation hoped to play in their remediation. Recognizing that Foundation involvement in the civil rights struggle

would mean a long-term commitment, Mr. Bundy said:

The position of the Ford Foundation on this point can be clearly stated. We believe that full equality for all American Negroes is now the most urgent domestic concern of this country. We will not attempt to work through any single chosen instrument or in any single field of activity. We think the familiar listing of jobs and education and housing is right, but not exhaustive. We shall do what we can to help in these fields. But we would add four concerns--for leadership--for research--for communication--and for justice.

Primary responsibility for implementing this program and policy was vested in the Foundation's newly established Division of National Affairs. In the years that followed, a number of program initiatives were developed and implemented by this division and by other components of the Foundation concerned with education and research.

In a 1967 program paper entitled "Equal Opportunity for Minority Groups," Foundation staff set forth the goals of the Foundation's grant-making activities in civil rights. They included strengthening the leadership and the programs of minority organizations; exploring ways to achieve better race relations; supporting policy-oriented research on race and poverty; promoting integration in housing; and increasing the availability of legal resources through support of litigating organizations and minority law students. The Foundation hoped through these activities to contribute to the solution of the nation's race problems, to help promote social change through lawful processes, and to afford disadvantaged minorities resources with which to define their own priorities and develop programs to achieve them.

The Foundation initially sought to achieve these goals through

support of organizations such as the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, which was heavily involved in civil rights litigation in Mississippi and which focused on voting rights, employment, education, and the administration of justice in that state; the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund (a wholly separate organization from the NAACP), which addressed similar issues on a nationwide basis; and the National Committee Against Discrimination in Housing, which was concerned with fair-housing issues. Over time, the pattern established by these early grants to black-oriented organizations led to grants benefiting other minorities and women.²

In 1977 Professor Michael Sovern (now president of Columbia University), acting as a consultant to the Foundation, summed up the rationale of the Foundation's support for civil rights litigation:

The case . . . was powerful. The objectives sought were vital American ideals: enforcement of the law of the land; equal access to voting, education, work, housing and the administration of justice. Litigation was an effective means to pursue those goals, but the civil rights groups lacked the resources to support a substantial number of lengthy contested lawsuits. Their clientele, the victims of systematic discrimination, were too poor to afford adequate representation.

Robert McKay, a professor of law at, and former dean of, the New York University Law School, observed in his 1976 report to the Ford Foundation on civil rights litigation:

No one asserts that litigation can assure instant solutions to the problems of discrimination. But skillful use of litigation can yield results that have impact far beyond the parties before the court in any given proceeding. With the equal protection clause of the Constitution as their principal guidepost, the Foundation's grantee organizations have been able to examine critically the policies and practices of the public and private sectors . . . to protect people

against discrimination on grounds of race, sex, or ethnic background. It is a significant result, achieved with a relatively modest level of resources.

In addition to its support for litigation activities, the Foundation aided such educational and advocacy organizations as the Southern Regional Council, the NAACP, the National Council of Negro Women, the Center for National Policy Review, and the National Urban League for work in such areas as housing, health, education, employment, and job training. Through support of these and other organizations, the Foundation has begun to meet the goals articulated in the 1967 program paper. It has contributed to the development of the leadership and programs of organizations serving minorities, by helping to sustain those organizations and enabling them to translate aspirations into achievable goals. Foundation support has helped make it possible for them to undertake thoughtful research on issues of race and poverty and has thereby helped ensure minority group participation in the formulation of public policy. By enhancing educational opportunities for minorities, it has afforded them a chance to develop skills and insights needed to improve their status. The organizations the Foundation has funded are generally recognized as leaders in the civil rights field and the activities in which they have been engaged bring direct and important benefits to the disadvantaged.

Although measurable progress has been made in reducing race-based inequality, major disparities still exist in the status of whites and blacks--disparities deeply embedded in the fabric of American society. The resources that can be brought to bear, by the

Ford Foundation and by other private funders, are limited. Ford Foundation staff believe, however, that by addressing the most glaring disparities the Foundation and its colleagues in the philanthropic community can play a part--however small--in creating an American society that is color-blind and in which all members can participate freely and fully. In the balance of this paper, the problems facing black Americans today are summarized and some current Ford Foundation programs to address these problems are described.

CURRENT PROBLEMS

There is scarcely an aspect of life in American society in which blacks are not markedly disadvantaged as compared to whites. Among the many areas where abiding disparities exist are income, employment, education, and political participation.

Income

One critical measure by which the current status of blacks can be examined is the disparity in the income of blacks and whites. As Tables I and II (on pages 14 and 15) demonstrate, the years from 1950 to 1975 witnessed some growth in median black family income and, at least in the seventies, an increase in the number of black families earning more than \$20,000 a year. In 1975, the median income of black families was 62 percent of white families' median income. By 1980, however, the median income of black families had dropped to 58 percent of the white median, and recently released United States Census Bureau data for 1981 show that the gap has since widened to 56 percent. John Reid, a professor of sociology at Howard University, points out that the pattern of disparity in the median income of black and white families persists even when examined by geographic region.³ In the West, for example, where black families tend to fare best, their median income in 1981 was 68 percent of the white median (\$16,592 compared to \$24,324); in the South, black median family income amounted to 56 percent of the white median (\$12,283 compared to \$22,051), matching the national figure. Nowhere does black median

Table I

Median Family Income by Race in Constant
1980 Dollars: 1950-1980

	<u>1950</u>	<u>1960</u>	<u>1970</u>	<u>1975</u>	<u>1979</u>	<u>1980</u>
All Races	\$11,361	\$15,637	\$20,939	\$21,004	\$22,320	\$21,023
Black Families ¹	6,398	8,987	13,325	13,441	13,219	12,674
White Families	11,792	16,235	21,722	21,845	23,275	21,904
B-W Ratio	54	55	61	62	57	58

¹ Prior to 1970, black families were not counted separately but were included in the category of "Blacks and Others."

Sources: Money Income and Poverty Status of Families and Persons in the United States: 1980. Current Population Reports, Consumer Income, Series P-60, No. 127, August 1981.

Table II

Family Income Distribution by Race, 1960-1980
(expressed as a percentage of total income for each race)

<u>FAMILY INCOME</u> <u>(in constant</u> <u>[1980] dollars)</u>	<u>1960</u>	<u>1970</u>	<u>1975</u>	<u>1979</u>	<u>1980</u>
<u>Upper Income</u> <u>(\$35,000 & Above)</u>					
Black		5%	4%	9%	8%
White	-	16	16	23	21
<u>Middle Income</u> <u>(\$20,000 to \$35,000)</u>					
Black	-	22	26	23	22
White	-	35	39	36	35
<u>Low Income</u> <u>(\$20,000 to \$10,000)</u>					
Black	33	37	32	30	30
White	44	33	29	26	28
<u>Very Low Income</u> <u>(\$10,000 & Below)</u>					
Black	55	36	38	38	40
White	25	16	16	15	16

Sources: Money Income and Poverty Status of Families and Persons in
the United States: 1980. Current Population Reports, Consumer
Income, Series P-60, No. 127, August 1981.

family income even approach that of white. On a per capita basis, according to 1980 Census Bureau data, blacks earned \$4,804 annually compared to white earnings of \$8,233.

David H. Swinton, director of the Southern Center for Studies in Public Policy, points out that one out of three blacks is living below the official poverty level, compared to one out of ten whites. Swinton also notes that the nation's recent economic ills have probably resulted in still greater disparities in the income and living standards of blacks and whites.⁴

Unemployment and Underemployment

Two more areas where blacks are disadvantaged as compared to whites are unemployment and underemployment. Although black and white labor force participation rates are about the same--the labor force being composed of those either working or looking for work--critical disparities exist in the employment patterns of the two groups. Since at least as far back as 1960 (and probably long before that), black unemployment rates have been approximately double those of whites. As of October 1982, for example, the unemployment rate of black men and women combined was 20.2 percent versus 9.3 percent of white men and women combined; 19.8 percent of black males over twenty were unemployed versus 8.8 percent of white males over 20; 16.3 percent of black females over twenty versus 7.6 percent of white females over twenty; 46.7 percent of black teenagers compared to 21.7 percent of white teenagers.⁵

As for underemployment--measured by such criteria as intermittent

employment, involuntary part-time work, marginal jobs, overeducation for work performed, and inequitable pay--the situation is no better (see Table III, on the next page). In March 1980, for example, 11.5 percent of black males in the labor force were experiencing intermittent employment, compared to 5.3 percent of white males. At the same time, 21.7 percent of black females in the labor force held marginal jobs, compared to 13.9 percent of white females. Five percent of black males in the labor force and 6.1 percent of black females in the labor force involuntarily held part-time jobs, compared to 2.7 percent of white males and 3.6 percent of white females. Blacks, in short, are roughly twice as likely to be unemployed and underemployed as their white counterparts.

Education

More black Americans than ever before are graduating from the nation's high schools and colleges. Between 1960 and 1980, the median school years completed by black adults rose from the eighth-grade to the twelfth-grade level (see Table IV, on page 19). And the school dropout rates of whites and blacks are converging. In 1981, 13.6 percent of blacks aged sixteen to nineteen were out of school and lacking a high school diploma, compared to 11.7 percent of whites in the same age group.

But again, major disparities persist in the overall educational attainment levels of blacks and whites. In 1980, for example, only 51 percent of blacks aged twenty-five or older had graduated from high school, compared to 70 percent of whites. This means, as James McGhee,

Table III

Unemployment and Underemployment by Ethnic Group and Sex, March 1980

	Males			Females		
	Majority	Black	Hispanic	Majority	Black	Hispanic
Number in the labor force (in thousands)	50,363	5,227	3,329	36,668	4,928	2,035
Percentage of the labor force unemployed	6.0	13.0	8.1	5.6	13.0	10.3
Underemployed through:						
Intermittent employment	5.3	11.5	9.0	4.0	8.1	7.4
Involuntary part-time work	2.7	5.0	5.7	3.6	6.1	5.5
Marginal jobs	5.3	11.9	11.2	13.9	21.7	18.5
Workers in poverty households	2.1	4.5	5.4	1.8	6.7	3.6
Overeducation	23.4	37.0	31.2	20.3	26.2	23.2
Inequitable pay	13.8	19.0	18.9	27.0	29.1	30.0
Neither unemployed nor underemployed	65.2	46.9	58.3	55.4	39.1	48.6

This table can be read as follows: in March 1980, there were 50,363,000 majority males in the labor force. Of these, 6.0 percent were unemployed, and 5.3 percent experienced intermittent employment.

Columns cannot be added because some workers experienced more than one form of underemployment.

Source: U.S. Commission on Civil Rights tabulations of 1980 Current Population Survey, supplemented by information from the Dictionary of Occupational Titles.

Table I9

Educational Attainment, by Race, of Persons 25 Years Old or Older,
1960-1980
(expressed as a percentage of total population for each race)

	<u>1960</u>		<u>1970</u>		<u>1975</u>		<u>1980</u>	
	<u>B</u>	<u>W</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>W</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>W</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>W</u>
<u>Elementary</u>								
4 years	23.8	6.7	15.1	4.2	12.3	3.3	9.2	2.6
5 to 7 years	24.2	12.8	16.7	8.3	14.3	6.6	11.0	5.3
8 years	12.9	18.1	11.2	13.6	8.5	10.6	7.2	8.4
<u>High School</u>								
1 to 3 years	19.0	19.3	23.3	16.5	22.3	15.0	21.2	13.2
4 years	12.9	25.8	23.4	35.2	27.1	37.3	30.9	37.7
<u>College</u>								
1 to 3 years	4.1	9.3	6.9	10.7	9.0	12.8	12.5	15.1
4 years or more	3.1	8.1	4.5	11.6	6.4	14.5	7.9	17.8
<u>Median school</u>								
years completed	8.0	10.9	9.9	12.2	10.9	12.4	12.0	12.5

Source: Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1981.
 U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census

director of research of the National Urban League, has observed, that only half of black adults have the generally accepted minimum level of preparation for both employment and training.⁶

Of course, high school graduation rates do not necessarily indicate the quality of education received by blacks. A review of black and white performance on Scholastic Aptitude Tests taken by college-bound seniors suggests that blacks on the whole are still receiving inferior high school educations. Blacks still score at least 100 points less than their white counterparts in both the verbal and the math tests. Furthermore, the college matriculation figures are somewhat misleading because they mask the fact that of approximately one million blacks attending institutions of higher education, more than half are enrolled in two-year institutions from which few will transfer to four-year programs. Many will even fail to complete their two-year programs.

Political Participation

In the area of political participation, one may observe both a pattern of slow progress and substantial remaining disparities between blacks and whites in reported voter registration and turnout, and in representation among the ranks of elected officials. For example, a significant gap exists between the percentages of eligible blacks and whites who are reported to have registered to vote. In 1972, 8.8 million blacks, or 65.5 percent, were reported registered to vote out of a total of 13.5 million eligible to do so. For whites in the same year, 88.9 million, or 73.4 percent, were reported registered out of

the eligible 121.2 million. In 1980, these figures were 9.8 million (60 percent) and 16.4 million, respectively, for blacks, and 94 million (68.4 percent) and 137.7 million, respectively, for whites. And, in the 1980 election, the percentage of voting age blacks who reported actually voting was 10 percent lower than that of the majority population (see Table V, on the next page).

As for the number of black elected officials, it is clear that dramatic increases have occurred (see Table VI, on page 23). In 1960, two blacks sat in the United States House of Representatives. In the Ninety-eighth Congress, twenty black voting members took seats in the House, as did one nonvoting black member from the District of Columbia. Since 1970, the total number of black elected officials has roughly tripled. But despite these gains, and despite the fact that blacks now constitute approximately 11.6 percent of the U.S. population, blacks hold barely one percent of the nation's elective offices. It is thus clear that blacks have yet to achieve even a semblance of representational parity with whites.

Shifts in the National Mood

In spite of the persistence of inequality, the broad public consensus embodied in the song "We Shall Overcome," which blacks and whites once sang together as they joined in the struggle for civil rights, is evaporating. Of the activist coalitions of blacks and whites that once worked so effectively for social change, few remain intact; those that do are in a fragile condition. Many vocal and powerful elements of the population believe that the problems of racial discrimination

Table V

Voting-Age Population, and Percent Reporting Registered and Voted:
1972 to 1980

CHARACTERISTIC	Voting-Age Population (mil.)					Percent Reporting They REGISTERED					Percent Reporting They VOTED				
	1972	1974	1976	1978	1980	1972	1974	1976	1978	1980	1972	1974	1976	1978	1980
Total	136.2	141.3	146.5	151.6	157.1	72.3	62.2	66.7	62.6	66.9	63.0	44.7	59.2	45.9	59.2
White	121.2	125.1	129.3	133.4	137.7	73.4	63.5	68.3	63.8	68.4	64.5	46.3	60.9	47.3	60.9
Black	13.5	14.2	14.9	15.6	16.4	65.5	54.9	58.5	57.1	60.0	52.1	33.8	48.7	37.2	50.5
Spanish Origin	5.6	6.1	6.6	6.8	8.2	44.4	34.9	37.8	32.9	36.3	37.4	22.9	31.8	23.5	29.9

Source: Current Population Reports, U.S. Bureau of the Census, series P-20, No. 359.

Note: Persons claiming Spanish origin may also claim other racial identities, thus the totals do not add up to the sum of the three categories.

Table VI

Number and Percentage Change, from Previous Year, of Black Elected Officials

	<u>Total BEOs</u>		<u>Federal</u>		<u>State</u>		<u>Regional</u>		<u>County</u>		<u>Municipal</u>		<u>Judicial/Law Enforcement</u>		<u>Education</u>	
	N	Percent Change	N	Percent Change	N	Percent Change	N	Percent Change	N	Percent Change	N	Percent Change	N	Percent Change	N	Percent Change
<u>1970</u>	1469	----	10	----	169	----	--	----	92	----	623	----	213	----	362	----
<u>1971</u>	1860	26.6	14	40.0	202	19.5	--	----	120	30.4	785	26.0	274	28.6	465	28.5
<u>1972</u>	2264	21.7	14	0.0	210	3.9	--	----	176	46.6	932	18.3	263	4.0	669	43.9
<u>1973</u>	2621	15.7	16	14.3	240	14.3	--	----	211	19.8	1053	12.9	334	27.0	767	14.7
<u>1974</u>	2991	14.2	17	6.3	239	0.4	--	----	242	14.7	1360	29.2	340	1.8	793	3.4
<u>1975</u>	3503	17.1	18	5.9	281	17.6	--	----	305	20.6	1573	15.7	387	13.8	939	18.4
<u>1976</u>	3979	13.6	18	0.0	281	0.0	30	----	355	16.4	1889	20.1	412	6.5	994	5.9
<u>1977</u>	4311	8.3	17	-5.6	299	6.4	33	9.1	381	7.3	2083	10.3	447	8.5	1051	5.7
<u>1978</u>	4503	4.5	17	0.0	299	0.0	26	-21.2	410	7.6	2159	3.6	454	1.6	1138	8.3
<u>1979</u>	4607	2.3	17	0.0	313	4.7	25	-3.8	398	-3.0	2224	3.0	486	7.0	1144	0.5
<u>1980</u>	4912	6.6	17	0.0	323	3.1	25	0.0	451	13.3	2356	5.9	526	8.2	1214	6.1

Source: Civil Rights Research Review

should no longer occupy a prominent place on the national agenda. This belief is fueled by a number of factors: the increasing visibility of a black middle class; the growing numbers of poor whites and poor immigrants whose problems are drawing some attention away from poor blacks, though blacks continue to be represented disproportionately among the poor; and a few highly publicized studies by a handful of neoconservative black scholars who to varying degrees argue that many civil rights laws and special emphasis programs are ineffectual if not counterproductive, and that many black people "choose" to stay disadvantaged.⁷

While few would argue that all problems of racial disadvantage are directly attributable to present discrimination, it is simplistic to suggest that none are when (1) courts continue to find that blacks are discriminated against in voting rights, education, employment, housing, municipal services, and many other areas; (2) the news media continue to report numerous instances of racial discrimination; (3) agencies of government, including the United States Commission on Civil Rights, continue to issue reports documenting racial discrimination; (4) civil rights organizations are flooded with requests for assistance from blacks; and (5) the vast majority of black people surveyed say that they have been, and continue to be, personally exposed to acts of racism and discrimination.

The neoconservative and other arguments mentioned above are being used by some as an excuse to weaken the enforcement of civil rights laws and to curtail special-emphasis programs designed to benefit minorities and women. At the same time, the nation's economic

ills, which to varying degrees affect all racial and ethnic groups, may increase white reluctance to extend special opportunities to blacks. It may also be that the white retreat from the civil rights movement was influenced by the "black power movement" of the mid-sixties, which led some whites to conclude that they could no longer play a significant leadership role in the civil rights area, and by the black urban uprisings of the late sixties that alienated additional whites from the civil rights cause. All these factors now threaten the modest gains that America's blacks, often at great personal cost, have managed to achieve.

The Civil Rights Infrastructure

These circumstances pose tremendous problems for civil rights organizations. With storm clouds on so many fronts, the organizations that form the backbone of the civil rights movement are financially strained and in a reactive stance. Many of them, including the National Urban League, the National Council of Negro Women, and the National Conference of Black Mayors are in a fragile financial condition because of cutbacks in the federal funds on which they have relied for service-delivery programs.

As a result of cutbacks, these and several other civil rights organizations have had to reduce staff and eliminate or substantially curtail important program activities. Cutbacks have also led these and other civil rights organizations to rely much more heavily on foundation and corporate funding and direct contributions from the public, increasing both competition for funds and rivalry detrimental to coalition building.

Furthermore, many such organizations must now expend scarce resources to defend against governmental actions that are weakening the gains that have been made in civil rights. A few examples should suffice to make this point. Blacks, like other Americans, want their children to receive quality education. To redress the historic pattern of substandard education for black children and to eliminate the badge of inferiority usually associated with segregated schools, efforts have been made over the years to dismantle dual systems of education. One means of fostering desegregation is busing. Yet the Justice Department has announced that it will not seek that remedy under any circumstances, and indeed it has been arguing vigorously against busing in numerous cases and supporting Congressional efforts to strip the federal courts of the power to order busing even as a remedy of last resort. The department has also supported segregationist academies in their bid for tax-exempt status, which, if granted, would clearly increase "white flight" from many integrated public schools; it has proposed inclusion of an "intent" standard of proof in cases arising under the Voting Rights Act, a position that would make it more difficult for blacks to prove a race-based violation of rights; and it has attempted to limit the fees that attorneys for prevailing parties can secure in civil rights litigation, a move that, if successful, would substantially weaken the efforts of private organizations to enforce civil rights laws. Finally, the department has been inattentive to enforcement of the Fair Housing Act, initiating few new cases since the change of administrations in 1981. In response to these and other actions,

civil rights groups must increase their efforts to preserve the hard-won gains of the past.

Many blacks liken the political climate prevalent in the country today to the post-Reconstruction period, during which the clock of black progress was turned back and racism thrived. Thus, at a time when there is a pronounced need among blacks for basic services and strong leadership, the resources needed to preserve or reestablish momentum are strained to the limit; civil rights organizations and their leaders are on the defensive; the old civil rights coalitions are increasingly fragmented; and the organizational infrastructure of the civil rights movement is in a weakened state.

This situation presents significant challenges to philanthropic institutions that, like the Ford Foundation, have sought to find remedies that would heal our nation's racial wounds. It requires such institutions to support a variety of activities on a variety of fronts. Some of the areas in which the Ford Foundation is now working, either for the first time or more actively than in the past, are described in the next section.

PROGRAM RESPONSES

With such grave problems confronting black people in so many areas, philanthropic organizations face difficult choices in selecting the problem areas to which they will direct their resources. Nevertheless selection is necessary, and the staff of the Foundation's Human Rights and Social Justice program plan grant-making activities in five areas. It is hoped that this grant making, complementing other Foundation program activities already under way, will contribute to long-term, fundamental improvement in the status of American blacks.

First, to help develop a self-sustaining means by which government can be made more responsive to blacks, the Foundation will fund an array of activities in the area of political participation. The program will support studies documenting discriminatory electoral practices, efforts to improve black voter education and registration services, monitoring and litigation to ensure implementation of the Voting Rights Act, and research and technical assistance for black elected officials.

Second, through support of litigation and advocacy challenging employment discrimination, the program will seek to reduce black unemployment and underemployment. Research on employee selection mechanisms will be supported to help employers eliminate discriminatory hiring and promotion practices.

Third, the program will attempt to engage black and other churches and religious organizations in pursuit of civil rights and social justice objectives. Churches comprise the only nationwide

network of institutions indigenous to and strongly supported by the black community. Our program will help them provide critical services for blacks and will help them explore creative uses of their financial resources.

Fourth, through provision of core and project support, the Foundation will help to stabilize national and regional civil rights organizations and to strengthen their capacity to respond to the needs of the black community.

Finally, we will support coalition- and consensus-building among blacks, Hispanics, Native Americans, and women, who experience many common problems but too often fail to work together effectively. The program will also attempt to improve communication between these groups and the general public by encouraging the media to give greater attention to race-based and sex-based discrimination.

Enhancing Black Political Participation

Free exercise of the right to vote is the foundation upon which the American democratic system of government rests and an important means by which all citizens may influence the public policies and laws under which they live. In a heterogeneous society, participation in the political process is also an important cohesive force binding together disparate and often competing groups and providing a forum for the peaceful resolution of differences.

Political participation has long been recognized by American blacks as a major priority of their civil rights efforts. As Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., noted in 1968:

In the past two decades Negroes have expended more effort in quest of the franchise than they have in all other campaigns combined. Demonstrations, sit-ins, and marches, though more spectacular, are dwarfed by the enormous number of manhours expended to register millions, particularly in the South.⁸

Notwithstanding the lofty place of the right to vote in our system of laws and its clear definition in the Fifteenth Amendment, some state and local governments have been impeding free exercise of voting rights by blacks and other minorities for many years. Among the devices utilized have been residency requirements, literacy tests, poll taxes, outright force, and the redrawing of electoral district lines to dilute the electoral strength of minorities. And, despite the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (hereinafter referred to as the "VRA") and its subsequent extension, discrimination against blacks and other minorities continues. The evidence presented before Congress in 1981 and 1982 in connection with extension of the VRA is replete with evidence of such discrimination: closures and last-minute changes in the location of polling places in many predominantly black areas and discriminatory annexation and gerrymandering practices that dilute black voting strength. These practices have contributed to low minority voter registration and turnout, and, as a result, underrepresentation of minorities among the ranks of elected officials.

In the past, the Foundation has supported a number of successful initiatives to increase the participation of blacks and other minorities in the electoral process. These programs--run by the Voter Education Project, the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, the American Civil Liberties Union Foundation, and the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law--support a range of important

activities: voter education and registration services aimed at increasing exercise of the franchise by blacks; technical assistance to individuals and community organizations concerning electoral processes, legal requirements, and minority rights and entitlements; educational programs to inform the public about barriers to the political participation of minorities; monitoring of compliance by federal, state, and local governments with the requirements of the Constitution and the VRA; and litigation to eradicate electoral practices that result in the denial or abridgement of minority voting rights.

If the promise of a responsive, fair, and representative government is to be realized, such activities must be supported. The Foundation thus intends to support activities of the types described below in the years just ahead.

Voter Education and Registration. As the statistics set forth earlier demonstrate, some small improvements in the number of blacks registering and voting have occurred in recent years. Many blacks, however, still fail to see how their participation in the political process can make government more responsive to their needs. Blacks who do not vote would benefit from exposure to nonpartisan voter education and registration activities. Among other reasons why it is important to improve black voter registration and turnout, the election of black officials in most instances requires heavy black voter turnout. In 1980, nearly 60 percent of black elected officials came from black-majority jurisdictions.⁹

The Foundation currently supports three organizations involved in this field. One is the National Coalition on Black Voter Participation, an organization that provides technical assistance and other research services to other organizations engaged in voter education and registration efforts. The other two are the Voter Education Project, which is active in eleven Southern states and which focuses on blacks; and the Southwest Voter Registration Education Project, covering the West and Southwest and concentrating on Hispanics and Native Americans. These two organizations prepare voter education materials for churches, NAACP branches, Southern Christian Leadership Conference chapters, and other groups. They teach local coalitions how to conduct voter education and registration activities and how to organize "get out the vote" carpools. They respond to requests from local coalitions for modest funds (\$200 to \$2,000) to defray field-staff expenses for voter registration and education activities. They help to identify areas of substantial underregistration and encourage local organizations to work in those areas. They help local groups set up meetings and show them how to organize door-to-door canvassing. They help develop material on the importance of the right to vote, distribute data on voting behavior, and remind prospective voters of the suffering that members of the civil rights movement have endured to secure access to the ballot box. These voter education and registration groups do not under any circumstances support particular candidates and they have long experience with the tax laws governing voter registration work. Both the Voter Education Project and the Southwest Voter Registration

Education Project have made substantial contributions to the increased participation of minorities in the exercise of their citizenship rights.

Implementation of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Despite extension of the VRA, the aim of the statute will be subverted unless it is vigorously implemented. Implementation may only occur if several forces are present. There must be careful monitoring of proposed electoral changes that are subject to review by the Justice Department. Information about discriminatory electoral practices and changes must be forwarded to the department or to parties involved in electoral litigation to ensure that appropriate actions are taken and informed judgments made. Discriminatory electoral practices must be documented. Public officials, community organizations, and others need assistance in developing nondiscriminatory electoral systems. Experts must be trained to provide such assistance. Several organizations that monitor and enforce the VRA will continue to receive Foundation support for work of this kind.

Studying the Impact of Black Political Participation. Black political participation has increased in recent years, and a growing number of blacks now hold elective office. What is the significance of these developments? What types of issues and concerns are motivating blacks to register and vote? What special problems are black elected officials experiencing? What impact have such officials had on the formulation of race-sensitive public policies? What effect has the

federal effort to devolve power and funds to the states had on blacks? Few studies have been made of these and other important topics. Yet they would be of unquestionable value in assessing the types of activities in which voter education and registration groups engage, in helping black and other elected officials gain a more accurate sense of the black electorate's expectations and priorities, and in planning the future direction of civil rights activities. The Foundation will therefore support some studies on these and related topics, both to help shape Foundation program activities and to provide the public with information and analysis.

Assisting Black Political Leadership. Finally, it is critically important to support new and established organizations of black political leaders. As Mayor Johnny Ford of Tuskegee, Alabama, pointed out eloquently in a conversation with Foundation staff, many black mayors, legislators, and others have deep roots in the civil rights movement. They are anxious to make government more responsive to the legitimate interests of black Americans, while addressing the needs of all of their constituents. Yet many of these legislators and mayors need more information about civil rights laws and programs and how to implement them. They have few, if any, sources of advice and assistance on which to draw. In 1980, 55 percent of black elected officials were elected from jurisdictions of 25,000 persons or less, so many cannot be expected to have a full understanding of the techniques and strategies needed to perform their duties or to secure state and federal financial assistance. As power shifts, under the

"new federalism," from the federal to state and local governments, the needs of black officials for information about programs and entitlements will increase. Black political leaders will be forced to operate on a state-by-state basis to secure financial support for their cities, towns, and counties.

Although most black elected and appointed officials belong to a wide range of professional associations and organizations, such groups as the National League of Cities and the United States Conference of Mayors do not always provide an adequate forum for the special needs and concerns of such black officials. Indeed, it has been suggested that some members of these multiracial organizations are reluctant to consider the governance problems of black leaders and the people whom they serve. Nor are these organizations fully able to serve the particular interests of elected officials, black or otherwise, from small municipalities where most black elected officials serve. It is thus important that these elected and appointed officials have available to them professional associations and organizations where race-sensitive issues, concerns, and problems are the major focus of attention. To assist black political leadership in this regard, the Foundation will consider supporting national and regional organizations of such leaders and related programs of research, advice, and information dissemination. This support will complement funding activities of the Foundation's Governance and Public Policy program.

Safeguarding Employment Opportunities

America's black population continues to suffer from disproportionately high levels of unemployment, and even those blacks fortunate enough to have jobs are often trapped in positions that offer little pay and upward mobility. Economic factors have often been cited as the cause of this situation, as have the relocation of industry from urban to suburban and foreign locations, a decline in the number of low-skill job opportunities, and the inferior educational opportunities commonly afforded to blacks. The United States Commission on Civil Rights, however, recently issued a report raising questions about the degree to which these factors account for unemployment and underemployment disparities between blacks and whites.¹⁰ When minority youths and white youths of the same age and educational attainment compete for similar jobs, the report declared, black and Hispanic youths are less likely to receive them. And when blacks of the same age as whites but with more education compete with those whites for jobs, blacks still experience more unemployment and underemployment.

The report also questions the importance of the so-called "cultural" factors cited by some as explanations for these disparities. Even when similarly qualified whites and blacks compete for low-skilled jobs, the report states, whites are often favored. While some or all of the explanations commonly offered for black unemployment and underemployment are no doubt partially valid, the report concludes, race-based discrimination is also a major contributing factor in black unemployment and underemployment.

Recognizing the importance of increasing employment opportunities

for disadvantaged minorities, the Foundation has supported activities that address the causes of minority unemployment and underemployment. The Foundation's Urban Poverty program, for example, supports programs to reduce welfare dependence among black female-headed households; to enhance educational and other opportunities for black teenaged parents and to reduce the incidence of teenage pregnancy; to develop innovative education and training opportunities for disadvantaged youths; and to improve the quality of public education. The Education and Culture program has made grants to increase minority access to institutions of higher education and to strengthen the capacities of educational institutions serving large numbers of minorities.

The activities described below are designed to complement strategies pursued in other Foundation programs.

Litigation and Advocacy. The Foundation is supporting the litigation, monitoring, and advocacy efforts of national and regional organizations working to end employment discrimination. While there has been considerable test-case and other litigation in the field since enactment of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (hereinafter "Title VII"), which prohibits employment discrimination on the basis of race, continued enforcement work is needed to ensure that blacks can secure fully their employment rights and entitlements. Foundation-supported litigation will address questions of hiring, promotion, and employment testing. Organizations such as those mentioned above are essential to the enforcement of Title VII.

To be sure, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and the

Department of Justice do receive complaints and do prosecute some cases involving race discrimination in employment. Much of the EEOC's work, however, is concerned with administrative resolution of individual employment discrimination claims and not institutional reforms and remedies. Furthermore, the EEOC has a massive backlog of cases to investigate and resolve--92,400 individual claims were filed in 1982 alone--and is thus largely unable to respond to emergent needs. By the same token, the department's authority to litigate pattern-and-practice complaints extends only to state and local government employers, and the department's resources are inadequate to address the needs in that area. Additionally, both the EEOC and the department are reviewing their enforcement policies: tension and substantial questions exist concerning the remedies for employment discrimination that will be sought, and there seems to be an effort to eviscerate strong coordinated federal enforcement efforts. Moreover, the department has announced its opposition to the numerical measurement of employers' desegregation efforts, a position that waters down the law and leaves employers in doubt as to what they are required to do.

The lamentable fact is, moreover, that many blacks and other minority group people no longer feel the federal government is interested in addressing their needs. Nor do they see evidence of a sincere federal commitment to vigorously implement Title VII. They do not--and to a great extent they cannot--rely upon the government for protection of their rights. A vigorous private Bar is thus needed to fill both the perceived and the actual enforcement void.

In supporting organizations that engage in work aimed at eradicating employment discrimination, Foundation staff seek to encourage grantees to develop programs that benefit the black working poor, including youths and the black working women who in many instances are the sole supporters of families. The types of issues and jobs that might be involved in such litigation are exemplified by the landmark decision of the United States Supreme Court in Griggs v. Duke Power Company, 401 U.S. 424 (1971). The case was brought by thirteen of the fourteen black employees of the Dan River Station of the Duke Power Company in North Carolina. The lower court found that prior to 1965 the company had openly practiced discrimination based on race in hiring and in work assignments and that of five operating departments--labor, coal-handling, operations, laboratory and test, and maintenance--all of the blacks worked in the labor department, where the highest paying jobs paid less than the lowest paying jobs in any of the other departments, in which only whites were employed. In 1955, the company instituted a policy of requiring a high school education for initial assignment to any department except labor, and for transfer from the coal-handling department to any other departments, labor excepted. Whites hired before the high school education requirement went into effect, however, continued to perform satisfactorily and to receive promotions in the all-white departments. Furthermore, in 1965, on the effective date of Title VII, the company added the requirement that new employees register satisfactory scores on two professionally prepared aptitude tests. However, as the court found, these tests neither were intended to nor

did measure the ability to learn to perform a particular job or category of jobs. The issue presented by the case, as ably framed in Chief Justice Burger's majority opinion, was:

. . . whether an employer is prohibited by the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title VII, from requiring a high school education or passing of a standardized general intelligence test as a condition of employment in or transfer to jobs when (a) neither standard is shown to be significantly related to successful job performance, (b) both requirements operate to disqualify Negroes at a substantially higher rate than white applicants, and (c) the jobs in question formerly had been filled only by white employees as part of a long-standing practice of giving preference to whites.

The court held that neither the high school completion requirement nor the general intelligence tests had been shown to bear a demonstrable relationship to successful job performance. In oft-quoted language, Justice Burger articulated the scope and meaning of Title VII:

Congress did not intend by Title VII . . . to guarantee a job to every person regardless of qualifications. In short, the Act does not command that any person be hired simply because he was formerly the subject of discrimination, or because he is a member of a minority group. What is required by Congress is the removal of artificial, arbitrary, and unnecessary barriers to employment when the barriers operate invidiously to discriminate on the basis of racial or other impermissible classification.

Congress has now provided that tests or criteria for employment or promotion may not provide equality of opportunity merely in the sense of the fabled offer of milk to the stork and the fox. On the contrary, Congress has now required that the posture and condition of the job seeker be taken into account. It has--to resort again to the fable--provided that the vessel in which the milk is proffered be one all seekers can use. The Act proscribes not only overt discrimination but also practices that are fair in form, but discriminatory in operation. If an employment practice which operates to exclude Negroes cannot be shown to be related to job performance, the practice is prohibited.

Having struck down racially "neutral" practices that had a disproportionate and adverse impact on blacks, the high court opened for blacks the door to higher-paying jobs in formerly segregated departments, and black applicants were able to compete more effectively with whites for entry-level positions and for promotion.

Foundation grantees are expected to work, as appropriate, on cases that involve hiring and promotion issues, the favorable resolution of which would benefit the black working poor. The grants will complement the women's rights work of the Foundation's Human Rights and Social Justice program and the interest in youth training and employment of the Urban Poverty program.

Employment Selection Issues. As the case of Griggs v. Duke Power Company suggests, hiring and promotional decisions are often based, wholly or in part, on test results. As a result of inferior educational opportunities and associated literacy and writing problems, however, blacks, as a group, tend to perform less well than whites on paper-and-pencil tests. Written tests thus tend to exclude many blacks from employment. As a result, the use of tests in hiring and job placement has been fraught with controversy ever since Title VII was enacted.

To implement Title VII, the EEOC has promulgated Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection Procedures. These guidelines require employers using a test that has an adverse impact on blacks to have available "data demonstrating that the test is predictive of or significantly correlated with important elements of work behavior

which comprise or are relevant to the job or jobs for which candidates are being evaluated." These guidelines were developed in the light of the testing and test validation standards developed by the American Psychological Association, which has since issued a draft revision of the standards. The formal issuance of the revised standards is sure to ignite renewed debate. In view of the critical importance of the EEOC guidelines and any proposed revisions of them, the Foundation expects to provide funds for an assessment of any revised standards promulgated by the American Psychological Association or the EEOC.

The Foundation will also support research in two other areas relating to employment testing: the uses to which IQ and general aptitude tests are put for selection purposes, and nontraditional methods of test preparation and administration. With respect to the former, a growing body of literature in the field of industrial psychology suggests that IQ and other aptitude tests are more appropriate than job-specific tests in predicting the ability of job candidates to perform successfully. Here too, however, blacks tend to score lower than whites, and at least one court has held that IQ tests are racially and culturally biased against blacks and hence do not accurately predict their learning potential. The validity of reliance on IQ and aptitude tests as they pertain to blacks in the employment context should therefore be examined, not just by industrial psychologists associated with corporations, but from other relevant perspectives as well.

The literature of the testing field has little to say about nontraditional methods of test preparation and administration. Yet

some promising work has been done in this regard, work that should be documented and made available to the public. For example, one of the few black industrial psychologists in the United States, James Outtz, improved the pass rate of black nursing students at Howard University on licensure examinations from 40 to 80 percent by developing and introducing into the nursing school's curriculum a course on problem solving. Outtz also worked with Detroit officials to prepare blacks for that city's police department promotions test, on which black scores had been an average of 16 percent lower than white, and dramatically improved black performance on the test. Reviewing the fifteen books recommended to candidates to prepare for the test, Outtz developed some 2,000 problem-specific questions that were then provided to blacks as a study guide. At the subsequent sitting for the test, the disparity between black and white average scores shrank to 6 percent. Despite the dramatic results of such innovative approaches, little has been written on them, a situation the Foundation hopes to help correct. The studies the Foundation intends to support should be of particular assistance to public agencies, many of which, under pressure to comply with the law, need to find new and fairer ways of selecting their employees.

Revitalizing Church Leadership in Social Justice Activities

Black churches are the only enduring, national network of institutions indigenous to the black communities of this country. Many believe that during the period of slavery, as Wyatt Tee Walker, pastor of Harlem's Canaan Baptist Church of Christ, has written:

. . . the crucial ingredient to black survival was the religion of the slave community. It was the music of the Spirituals that gave cohesion and meaning to life in the slave warrens of the South. They served as the "grapevine" with which slaves communicated with each other in and out of the presence of the masters. Thus they were the chief instrumentality that induced humanness and wholeness in an inhumane system. The religious music of the slaves became the universal framework on which their synthesized faith--Christianity plus traditional African religion--developed. Thus the black church, from its inception in the brush arbors and canebrakes of the South to its considerable development by the end of the Civil War, was a response to the racism of the South's slavocracy.]]

Because their roots extend back to the time of slavery, the mission of black churches has always been defined largely by the experience of racism and discrimination and directed at bringing about change in the inferior, disadvantaged status of black people. In the early fifties and the ensuing years of the American civil rights movement, it was thus natural for black clergy and church members to assume important roles as leaders, participants, and financial supporters in the struggle for civil rights.

The support of religious leaders and institutions for civil rights initiatives was instrumental in shaping the public consensus that led to the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and its progeny. It was a reaffirmation by the nation of its belief in equal justice under the law and of the religious tenets underlying that secular doctrine. But, as Lawrence N. Jones, dean of the Howard University Divinity School, suggests, the struggle for civil rights has undergone a change in character over the past several years:

Between the years 1955 and 1968 the preeminent personage in that struggle was Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., a Baptist preacher possessed of a deep Christian

commitment to social justice, who galvanized great numbers of persons of all races around his philosophy of social change through non-violent means.

The mass base for his movement were many dedicated young people and the black churches of the nation. His campaigns were characterized by mass meetings reminiscent of revival times and, though non-denominational in constituency, were thoroughly . . . religious in character.

In the fourteen years since the death of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., there has been what some have called a secularization of the Civil Rights Movement. Without debating the merits and demerits of this position, it is nevertheless clear that the central role which the churches played during the King era has changed dramatically.¹²

Religious leadership in the area of civil rights declined for several reasons: the absence of obvious courses of social action after the period of sit-ins and demonstrations had passed; the belief that government would assume responsibility for, and be responsive to, civil rights concerns; and frustration at the intractable nature of racism and discrimination in society. In addition to these factors, in the case of white religious leaders and institutions, as was noted above, the decline may also be attributable to the emergence of the "black power movement" in the mid-sixties. In the case of black religious leaders and institutions, the decline may also be attributable to the lack of strong denominational structures among black churches, making unified efforts difficult.

The black community, however, remains dedicated to civil rights concerns and black clergy increasingly express a desire to strengthen the capacity of their churches to meet the needs of blacks. As Dr. Charles E. Cobb, executive director of the United Church of Christ's Commission for Racial Justice, has put it:

We of the black church have the unenviable responsibility of providing the fulcrum on which black liberation and self-determination must rest. Our ministries are inextricably tied to politics, economics and social values.

There was a time when the black church was live and awake. It is simply not enough to call ourselves a sleeping giant, as we often do, and yet continue to sleep.

My brothers and sisters of the black clergy, if we view the black church as this sleeping giant, then we have the responsibility of waking the black church and making it the giant it once was and ought to be. This is our challenge.¹³

Black clergy have greater access to the hearts and minds of the nation's black people than any other group of leaders. They play an important role in stimulating individual initiative and self-reliance. They can be a critical force in encouraging blacks to make use of available services, to persist in their struggle for self-improvement and social change, and to turn away from the self-destructive attitudes and behavior that result from long years of disadvantage.

It is estimated that there are 75,000 black churches in the United States with a collective membership conservatively estimated at more than 16 million people. While some black churches are very large, the average black church has approximately 200 members. Many of the ministers serving these churches must work full-time in secular jobs and must perform their ministerial functions in their spare time. Few of these ministers are college-trained and fewer still have been exposed to formal theological education or to systematic analysis of social problems and possible solutions. It is clear, however, given the pivotal role that religious leaders and institutions have played in the black community throughout history, that large numbers of blacks would be likely to

respond favorably to any unified calls by black religious leaders in the area of civil rights and social justice.

Many of the nation's foremost civil rights leaders--Joseph Lowery, Walter Fauntroy, Jesse Jackson, Benjamin Hooks, Leon Sullivan, Carl McCall, Malcolm X, and, of course, Martin Luther King, Jr.--have come from black churches. The next generation of black leaders is also likely to emerge, to a great extent, from those same churches. The black clergy are the trunk-line through which many blacks receive services, hope, and information about constructive social change. Black religious institutions have financial resources and fund-raising capabilities that, if marshaled for united action, could have a significant impact on problems of racial disadvantage and discrimination. And religious leaders, whether black or otherwise, speak with much authority on matters of import to blacks.

For all these reasons, the Human Rights and Social Justice staff of the Ford Foundation are exploring ways in which Foundation support would be useful in expanding the capacity of black religious organizations and leadership to engage in new civil rights and community improvement initiatives. Several courses of action are being considered. For example, a number of national civil rights organizations have expressed interest in developing joint programs with national black church organizations, programs that might involve leadership development, rights education and documentation, and the dissemination of successful church-run program models and their results. Another exploration will probe the interest of black religious institutions in engaging in programs already on the

Foundation's agenda, such as work in the fields of political participation, literacy training, and teenage pregnancy prevention. The explorations will seek to identify program areas in which broad and systematic participation by the black church holds promise for significant improvements in the welfare of the black community.

Strengthening the Civil Rights Infrastructure

The list of civil rights organizations that are broadly based, professionally staffed, and multiple in purpose is not long; it includes the National Urban League, the NAACP, the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, People United to Save Humanity (PUSH), the National Council of Negro Women, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, the Leadership Conference for Civil Rights. When one considers the size of the black population, the magnitude of the problems that population must face, and the limited financial resources available to solve them, one must conclude that these organizations have done a remarkable job thus far in helping to improve the plight of blacks in America. Working through local offices, branches, and networks of cooperating attorneys and others, these organizations have been able to keep their hands on the pulse of black America and have provided essential advocacy and services for the nation's disadvantaged black population. But, as discussed above, these organizations, which constitute the infrastructure of the black civil rights movement, are currently experiencing serious problems.

First, reductions in federal funding threaten the viability of most of the organizations, which, as a result, must devote increasing time and energy to raising funds from the private sector. The private funding pie is, however, limited, and that fact tends to result in organizational rivalries. Moreover, in recent years some civil rights organizations have lost a degree of independence in setting program priorities by emphasizing work in areas for which federal financial assistance was available. The withdrawal of federal funding at a time when new initiatives are called for obliges these organizations to develop new programs and priorities with no assurance that the funds will be available. The resources and staff these organizations can devote to fund raising are limited. And the conservative national mood is contributing to the drying up of the public support that in the past helped to make racial progress possible.

In an effort to respond to the burgeoning number of requests for litigative and other assistance, civil rights organizations have engaged increasingly in a wide array of special-emphasis programming, outreach, coalition building, litigation, and advocacy. It is difficult to summarize so vast a range of activities, but a few examples may be helpful. The NAACP has several hundred thousand members and more than 1,500 local branches across the country. Its legal component is involved in education, employment, and voting rights discrimination cases, among others. In an effort to improve the academic performance of black youths, some local branches conduct SAT preparation classes. Others work in correctional institutions to improve the literacy of prison inmates and to assist them in securing employment when released. Still others

are concerned with black economic development, police brutality, voter education and registration, the resurgence of the Ku Klux Klan, housing, health care, and a host of other issues. They hold meetings and conferences, disseminate information, and conduct programs to address these concerns, and in addition engage in membership drives and other types of fund-raising activities. The NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, working through a small legal staff and a network of some 400 attorneys across the country, is engaged in litigation and advocacy on issues of school desegregation (for example, on the question of whether segregationist academies are entitled to tax-exempt status); jury discrimination (ensuring black representation); capital punishment (more than 50 percent of the people executed in the United States since 1930 have been black); police brutality (a factor in many urban riots); the equalization of municipal services (ensuring that federal funds are used equitably to improve the living conditions of blacks); and fair housing (safeguarding rights to equal housing opportunity). In sum, whether the organizations have focused on discrimination or its manifestations, they must rethink, test, and alter their approaches to problem resolution. As a result of all of these circumstances, the organizations, not surprisingly, are spread thin.

Because these organizations are the civil rights voice of the mass of black people in the United States, because they constitute an invaluable resource to the black community, and because they have the potential to provide still more effective leadership in the future, the Foundation plans to continue to provide them with general support. Grants to the major national and regional civil rights

organizations will assist them in preserving and enhancing their diverse programs. Furthermore, the Foundation will give particular attention to the implementation of fund-raising initiatives to broaden and diversify the organizations' financial bases.

One of the most serious funding problems confronted by the larger civil rights organizations is their frequent inability to secure core funding for their programs. Many foundations and corporate donors provide only project support, perhaps because the donors prefer to concentrate on a limited number of areas in order to make a specific impact or perhaps because of a reluctance to be identified with some aspects of an organization's work. Whatever the reasons, the inability of civil rights organizations to secure core funding from many sources works a severe hardship on their ability to address a broad spectrum of issues effectively. It means that their flexibility in apportioning funds among existing program areas is limited. It detracts from the organizations' capacity to engage in creative and long-range planning. It precludes them from responding to unanticipated problems, needs, and opportunities. For these reasons, and in view of the organizations' need to maintain a civil rights presence in many areas during this crisis period, the Foundation expects to continue to provide a number of these organizations with general support.

The Foundation will also help selected civil rights organizations to strengthen and diversify their financial bases by providing funds for projects assisting them in devising more effective fund-raising campaigns. Relatively small, one-time grants will be

made available for purposes related to fund raising to selected organizations that meet the following criteria:

- (a) The organization must be involved in significant civil rights work and must have a record of accomplishment.
- (b) The organization must either have recently lost significant revenues needed to sustain its operation or must require additional funds to support an expansion of program activities in underserved aspects of black civil rights or equity-related work.
- (c) The fund-raising program must have a reasonable chance for success.

Consensus Building

As noted earlier, the prevailing economic and political climate in the nation has exacerbated tensions among historically disadvantaged groups--blacks, Hispanics, Native Americans, immigrants, and women--who are in competition for increasingly limited opportunities and resources. For example, some blacks are concerned that Hispanic immigration will cause increased unemployment and underemployment in the black community. Some Hispanics resent the reluctance of some blacks to support bilingual education and liberalized immigration policies. Likewise, blacks and Hispanics are sometimes at odds in the political context, where black or Hispanic voting strength may be

subject to dilution depending on how electoral lines are drawn. Black and Hispanic civil rights groups do not support women's rights groups as often as they could, sometimes failing to acknowledge that half of their own constituency is female and thus subject to the double burden of sex and race discrimination. Native American issues often receive little support from any other civil rights groups. Even among civil rights organizations serving the same constituency there is increased conflict and competition for public attention, financial support, and services for constituents.

Even if there are points on which agreement cannot be reached among these groups, there are areas in which joint action can be undertaken. An example of this is the coalition of labor unions, Jewish organizations, and black, Hispanic, Native American, and women's civil rights groups that developed in support of extension of the Voting Rights Act. But still better communication, understanding, and cooperation must be fostered among these groups. To this end, the Ford Foundation will support activities to bring such groups together and to help them identify common concerns around which coalitions and joint efforts can be organized. For example, the Foundation may convene a planning group composed of representatives of civil rights organizations serving blacks, Hispanics, Native Americans, and women to develop a list of topics for discussion. Later, support may be provided for a series of meetings of these groups to discuss these topics in depth. Possible topics include occupational segregation, health care, political participation, and media portrayals of minorities, women, and immigrants. Foundation staff will also work

with various coalition-building organizations to strengthen their effectiveness, encourage dissemination of information on common problems and crises, facilitate better coordination, and encourage joint projects.

In addition, the public at large must be reminded of the problems of discrimination and disadvantage in the United States in order to strengthen the public and governmental resolve to address these problems. Accordingly, the Foundation will support, principally through such media as films, periodicals, and literature, works designed to resensitize the public to the continuing problems of minorities and women in the country. If, as we believe, the broad public consensus in support of civil rights is eroding partly because of the absence of attention to the persistence of these problems, such film and other media projects should help to evoke thoughtful recommitment by decent Americans to making the country true to its lofty promise of equal justice for all.

CONCLUSION

In the preface to his 1978 book In the Matter of Color, Judge A. Leon Higginbotham states: "Today, America is finally at the point where it has the potential to resolve in a positive way so many of the problems of the past. If we dare ignore this opportunity, the alternative will be to drift into further polarization."¹⁴ One major goal of the Ford Foundation's Human Rights and Social Justice program is to help America pursue new opportunities in the area of race relations. The high visibility days of the civil rights movement when dramatic advances could be secured are largely behind us. Many unfair laws have been struck down, other laws aimed at the elimination of social inequities have been passed and upheld, affirmative action programs have had significant impacts in many fields, and overt--if not covert--discrimination has been largely eliminated. What remains today is the slower, more difficult, long-term task of consolidating the gains of the past and keeping our nation's focus on the important work that remains to be done. The Ford Foundation intends to continue and to intensify its efforts to help blacks, Hispanics, Native Americans, women, and other disadvantaged groups to achieve their full measure of human dignity and all the rights to which they are entitled in American society. We hope that others will join us in collaborative and complementary efforts to reach that goal.

NOTES

1. Speech before the National Urban League, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, August 2, 1966.
2. Foundation funds also helped to establish the Native American Rights Fund, the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund, the Puerto Rican Legal Defense and Educational Fund, the Women's Law Fund, and the Legal Action Center of the City of New York.
3. John Reid, Population Bulletin: Black America in the 1980s (published by the Population Reference Bureau, Inc.), Vol. 37, No. 4 (December 1982), p. 30.
4. David H. Swinton, "The Economic Status of the Black Population," in The State of Black America 1983 (National Urban League, 1983), pp. 45ff.
5. Reid, op. cit., p. 26.
6. James D. McGhee, "The Changing Demographics in Black America," in The State of Black America 1983, p. 13.
7. Walter Williams, for example, asserts in his book, The State Against Blacks, that federal overregulation of the economy is the primary barrier to growth of a black entrepreneurial base and class. Likewise, Thomas Sowell, in his book, Ethnic America, argues that race-based disparities between whites and blacks in income, for example, are insignificant when the statistics are controlled for education and age. While conceding the existence of racial discrimination against blacks, both quarrel with civil rights laws and special emphasis programming as an appropriate solution to black disadvantage. While they doubtless make some legitimate points, neither apparently recognizes that the legislative history underlying the civil rights laws and special emphasis programming that they deride shows plainly that the laws and programs were designed to eliminate and/or deter discrimination. The laws and programs do not purport to be the means by which all racially identifiable disadvantage can be redressed. Rather, the purpose of the civil rights laws and special emphasis programs, such as affirmative action, is to remediate only those aspects of black disadvantage that flow from race-based discrimination.

8. Martin Luther King, Jr., "Role of the Behavioral Scientist in the Civil Rights Movement," Journal of Social Issues, Vol. 24 (January 1968), p. 24.
9. See Thomas E. Cavanaugh and Denise Stockton, The Characteristics of Black Elected Officials, 1970-1980 (Washington, D.C.: Joint Center for Political Studies, September 1982).
10. See Lawrence N. Jones, "The Black Churches in Historical Perspectives," The Crisis, Vol. 89, No. 9 (November 1982), pp. 6-10.
11. Wyatt Tee Walker, "The Black Church Was Born In Response to Slavery," The Crisis, op. cit., p. 12.
12. Jones, op. cit., p. 10.
13. Charles E. Cobb, "A Message to Black Preachers," The Crisis, op. cit., p. 12.
14. A. Leon Higginbotham, Jr., In the Matter of Color: Race and the American Legal Process. The Colonial Period (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), p. ix.